

the invention of Group III should be combined with the invention of Group I, or rejoined upon allowance of the invention of Group I.

At the time of filing the present application, a translation of the amendments filed under PCT Article 34 were not provided. This should explain the Examiner's confusion with respect to the cancellation of various claims referred to in the Preliminary Amendment filed December 31, 1998. The filing of a Preliminary Amendment on December 31, 1998 was entirely proper and is Applicants' position that the Examiner should have considered the Preliminary Amendment in the Restriction Requirement. The Examiner's basis for not considering the Preliminary Amendment is not understood. However, since the Examiner has not considered the Preliminary Amendment, Applicants have included most of the same amendments in addition to new claims in this response. Applicants have started the numbering of the new claims with claim 18. It should be further noted that claim 23 in the present amendment corresponds to claim 26 in the Preliminary Amendment and the basis for this claim is originally filed claim 5. Claim 24 in the present amendment corresponds to claim 27 in the Preliminary Amendment and finds support in originally filed claim 6. Claims 25-27 correspond to claims 28-30 in the Preliminary Amendment and correspond to claims 23-25 in the article 34 claims. Again, all

Appl. No. 09/214,277

of the claims in the Preliminary Amendment are being resubmitted since the Examiner did not consider the Preliminary Amendment.


Favorable action on the merits is respectfully requested.

Should there be any outstanding matters that need to be resolved in the present application, the Examiner is respectfully requested to contact Marc S. Weiner (Reg. No. 32,181) at the telephone number of the undersigned below, to conduct an interview in an effort to expedite prosecution in connection with the present application.

If necessary, the Commissioner is hereby authorized in this, concurrent, and future replies, to charge payment or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 02-2448 for any additional fees required under 37 C.F.R. § 1.16 or under 37 C.F.R. § 1.17; particularly, extension of time fees.

Respectfully submitted,

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By 

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